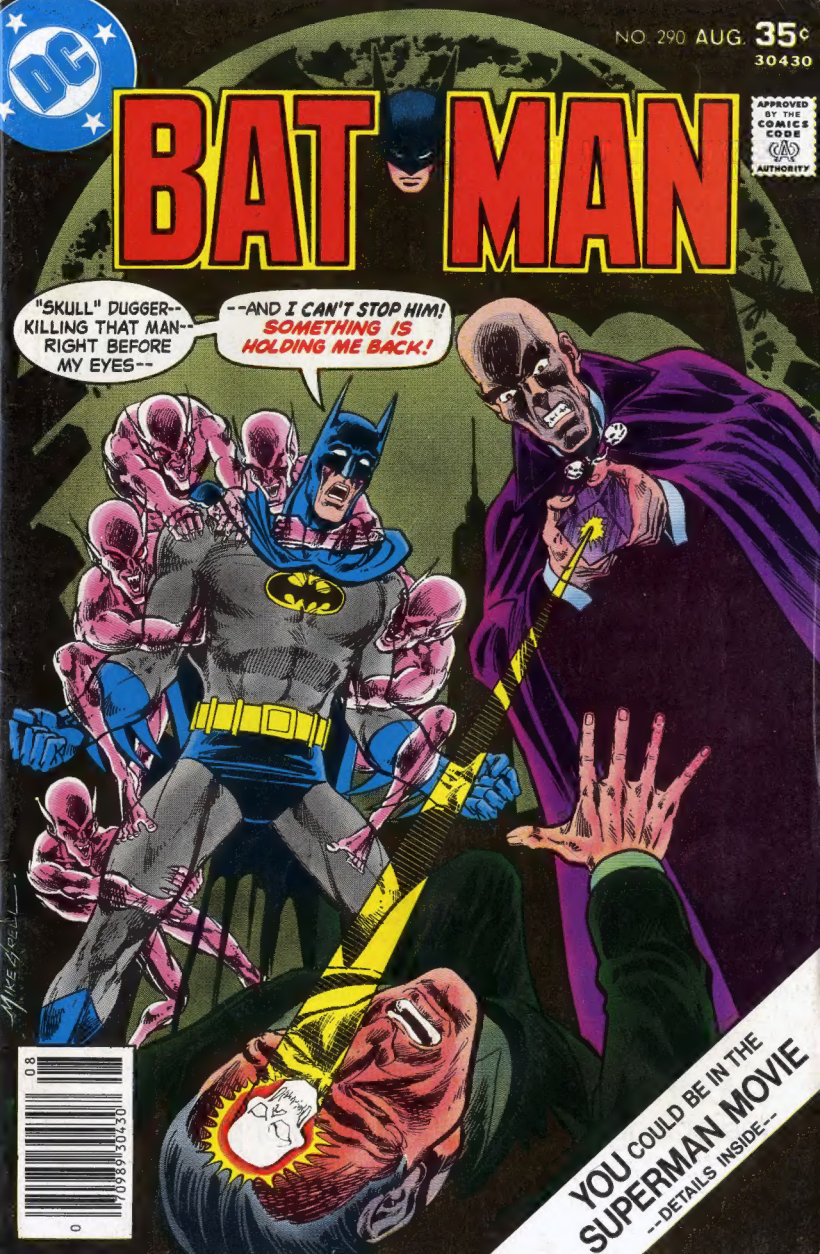
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BAT MAN
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"SKULL" DUGGER--KILLING THAT MAN--RIGHT BEFORE MY EYES--
--AND I CAN'T STOP HIM! SOMETHING IS HOLDING ME BACK!
MIKE GRELL
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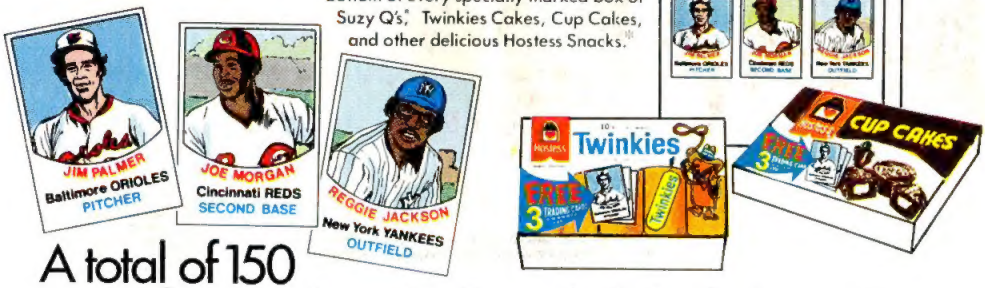

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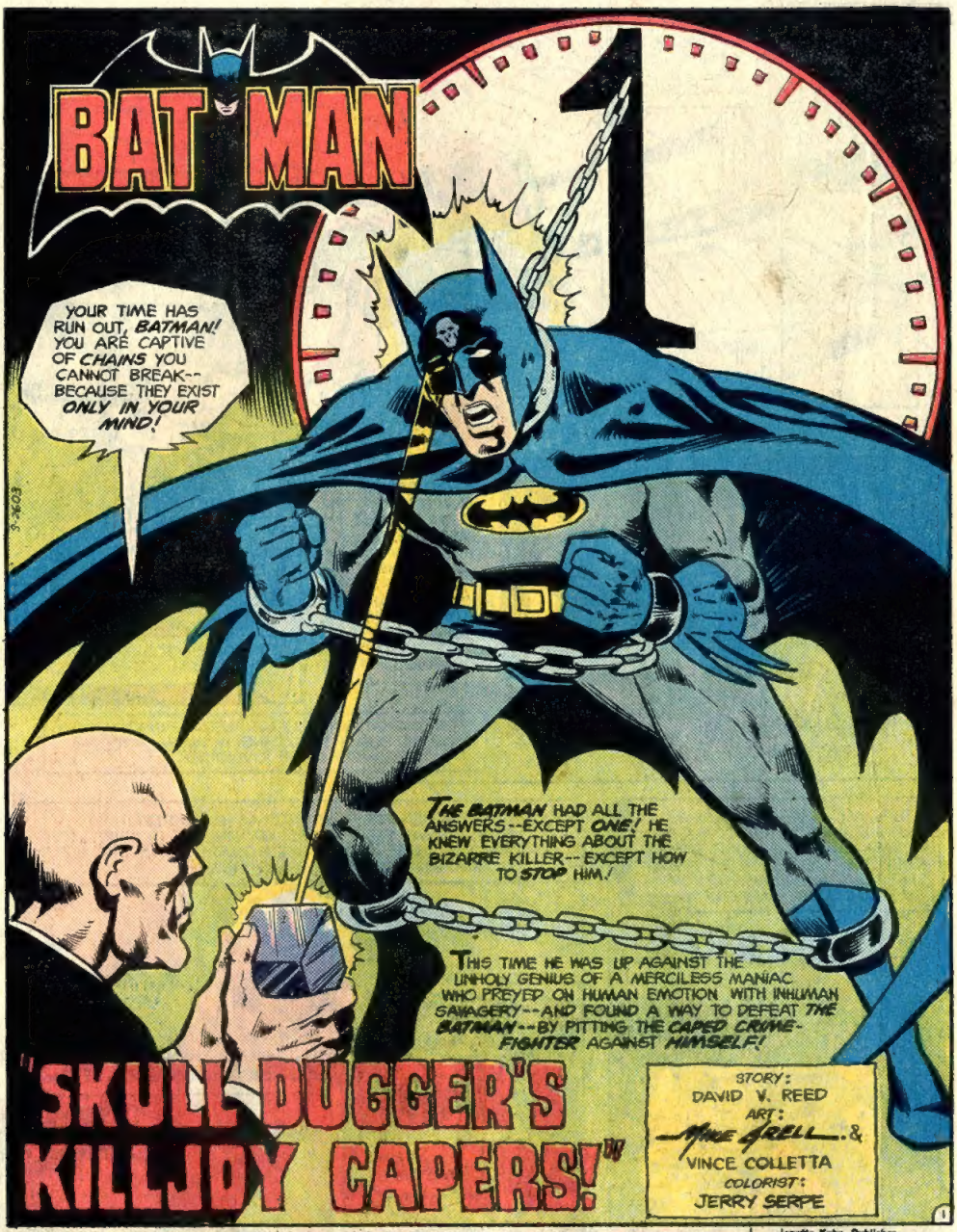
BAT MAN
1
YOUR TIME HAS RUN OUT, BATMAN! YOU ARE CAPTIVE OF CHAINS YOU CANNOT BREAK-- BECAUSE THEY EXIST ONLY IN YOUR MIND!
THE BATMAN HAD ALL THE ANSWERS--EXCEPT ONE! HE KNEW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE BIZARRE KILLER-- EXCEPT HOW TO STOP HIM!
THIS TIME HE WAS UP AGAINST THE UNHOLY GENIUS OF A MERCILESS MANIAC WHO PREYED ON HUMAN EMOTION WITH INHUMAN SAVAGERY--AND FOUND A WAY TO DEFEAT THE BATMAN--BY PITTING THE CAPED CRIME-FIGHTER AGAINST HIMSELF!
"SKULL DUGGER'S KILLJOY CAPERS!"
STORY: DAVID V. REED
ART: MIKE GRELL & VINCE COLLETTA
COLORIST: JERRY SERPE

BATMAN, Vol. 28, No. 290, August, 1977. Published monthly by DC COMICS INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and Additional Mailing Offices. Copyright © 1977 by DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

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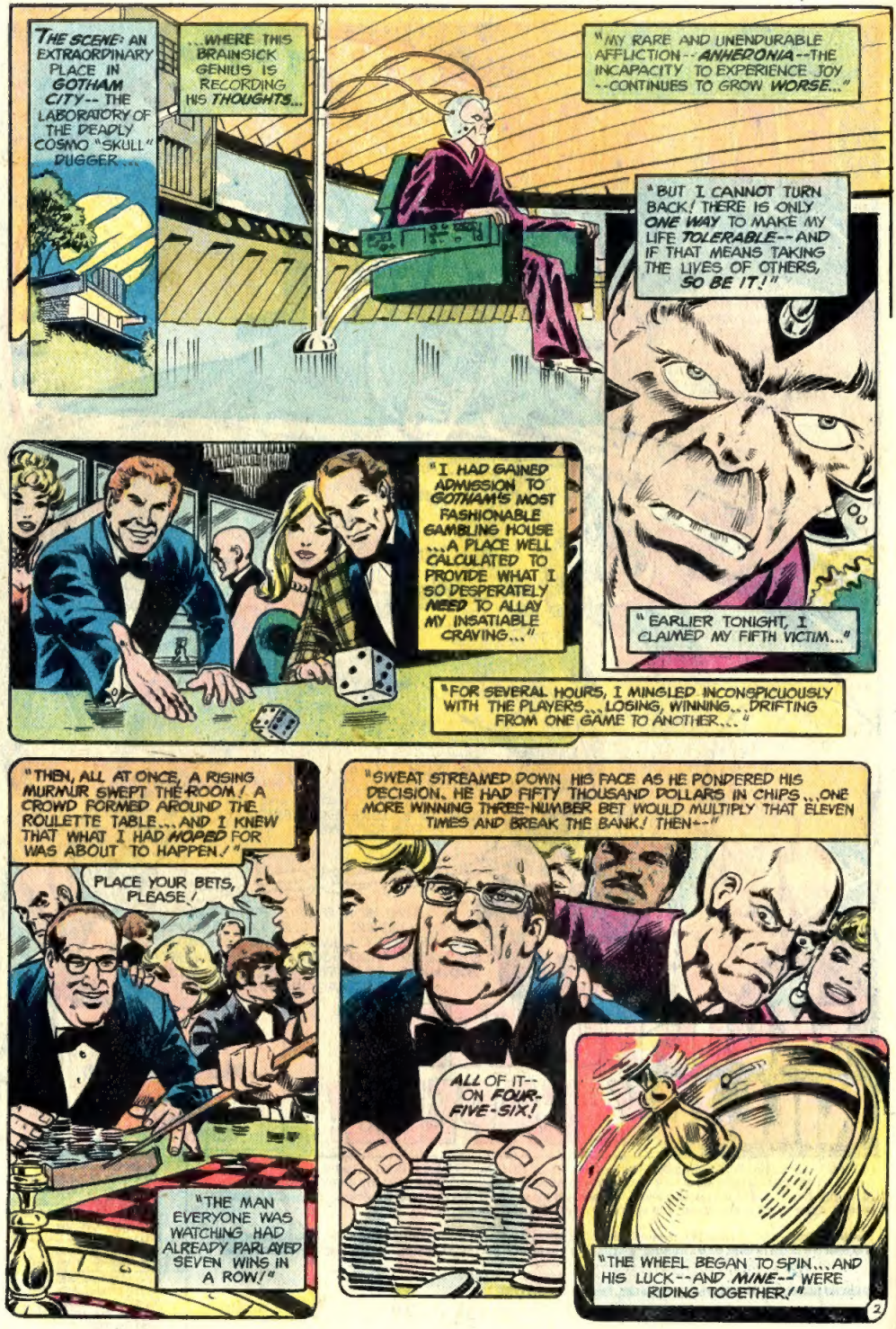
THE SCENE: AN EXTRAORDINARY PLACE IN GOTHAM CITY -- THE LABORATORY OF THE DEADLY COSMO "SKULL" DUGGER...
...WHERE THIS BRAINSICK GENIUS IS RECORDING HIS THOUGHTS...
"MY RARE AND UNENDURABLE AFFLICTION -- ANHEDONIA -- THE INCAPACITY TO EXPERIENCE JOY -- CONTINUES TO GROW WORSE..."
"BUT I CANNOT TURN BACK! THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO MAKE MY LIFE TOLERABLE -- AND IF THAT MEANS TAKING THE LIVES OF OTHERS, SO BE IT!"
"EARLIER TONIGHT, I CLAIMED MY FIFTH VICTIM..."
"I HAD GAINED ADMISSION TO GOTHAM'S MOST FASHIONABLE GAMBLING HOUSE ...A PLACE WELL CALCULATED TO PROVIDE WHAT I SO DESPERATELY NEED TO ALLAY MY INSATIABLE CRAVING..."
"FOR SEVERAL HOURS, I MINGLED INCONSPICUOUSLY WITH THE PLAYERS...LOSING, WINNING...DRIFTING FROM ONE GAME TO ANOTHER..."
"THEN, ALL AT ONCE, A RISING MURMUR SWEPT THE ROOM! A CROWD FORMED AROUND THE ROULETTE TABLE...AND I KNEW THAT WHAT I HAD HOPED FOR WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN!"
PLACE YOUR BETS, PLEASE!
"THE MAN EVERYONE WAS WATCHING HAD ALREADY PARLAYED SEVEN WINS IN A ROW!"
"SWEAT STREAMED DOWN HIS FACE AS HE PONDERED HIS DECISION. HE HAD FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IN CHIPS...ONE MORE WINNING THREE-NUMBER BET WOULD MULTIPLY THAT ELEVEN TIMES AND BREAK THE BANK! THEN--"
ALL OF IT -- ON FOUR-FIVE-SIX!
"THE WHEEL BEGAN TO SPIN...AND HIS LUCK -- AND MINE -- WERE RIDING TOGETHER!"
2

"I HEARD THE WHEEL SLOWING...MY ATTENTION RIVETED ON THE PLAYER... MY E-V SCOPE POISED! SUDDENLY, A ROAR WENT UP..."
NUMBER SIX!
I WIN!
"THAT INSTANT--AT THE PEAK OF HIS TRIUMPH--I STRUCK!"
"NEXT MOMENT..."
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HIM?
STAND BACK--GIVE HIM ROOM!
"I HAD CAPTURED IT--ALL THAT WILD, PURE JOY...THE JOY WITHOUT WHICH LIFE IS WORTHLESS--STOLEN--TO BE STORED AWAY--AND LATER MINE TO EXPERIENCE!"
"HE WAS DEAD, OF COURSE... KILLED LIKE THE OTHERS...BY SOMETHING I CANNOT YET FATHOM..."
WAS IT A HEART ATTACK?
NO! LOOK AT HIS FOREHEAD--A SKULL!
EXIT
"THE SIGN OF THE SKULL!--A KILLING WITH MY SIGNATURE ON IT."
"FOR TWO DAYS--EVER SINCE I TRIED TO STEAL THE BODY OF ONE OF MY VICTIMS FROM THE MORGUE--THE NEWS-MEDIA HAVE BEEN REPORTING OMINOUS RUMORS OF THE MYSTERIOUS SKULL DEATHS..."
"TONIGHT, THOSE DREAD RUMORS HAVE BEEN PROVED TRUE!"
"BUT NOTHING CAN BE PROVED AGAINST ME! MY IDENTITY AND MY CRIMES ARE KNOWN TO THE BATMAN. BUT IN HIS TORTURED STATE--WHERE HIS EVERY NATURAL IMPULSE FOR JOY IS INSTANTANEOUSLY CONVERTED TO PAIN--"
"--IT IS PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO APPROACH ME!"
"YET, KNOWING HIS LEGEND, ONE THING IS CERTAIN--HE WILL PERSEVERE! SOONER OR LATER, HE'LL COME FOR ME..."
"AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, I'LL BE WAITING--TO CURE HIM--AND KILL HIM!

THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON: FOR ALMOST TWO DAYS, BRUCE WAYNE--THE BATMAN'S PUBLIC PERSONA--HAS BEEN IN SECLUSION AT HIS GOTHAM PENTHOUSE HOME...IMMOBILIZED...STRUGGLING TO MASTER HIS APPALLING DILEMMA...
IT'S NO USE...I'VE GOT TO FACE IT! THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO TO CHANGE WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME...THESE MADDENING REVERSALS IN MY REACTIONS!
ONLY SKULL DUGGER HAS THE ANSWER... IF THERE IS ANY!
DUGGER HAS KILLED AGAIN... BUT I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT... OR PROVE IT!
EVEN HIS INCREDIBLE THOUGHT-RECORDER WOULD NEVER BE ACCEPTED AS EVIDENCE!
GOTHAM TIMES
SKULL MURDERS
REPORTS CONFIRMED
BY GAMBLING CASINO DEATH!
I CAN'T EVEN GO NEAR HIM! THE MERE THOUGHT OF LAYING MY HANDS ON HIM CUTS THROUGH ME LIKE A KNIFE!
LUNCH IS SERVED, MASTER BRUCE. INSIDE, I SUGGEST--IT'S MUCH TOO... PLEASANT... OUT HERE.
SOME MINUTES LATER...
HOW IS IT, SIR?
DREADFUL, ALFRED--THANK YOU! EVERYTHING I DISLIKE--HALF-COOKED AND UNSEASONED--PERFECT!
THAT'S A JOKE, ALFRED... ONLY THE JOKE'S ON ME!
THEN, SOON AFTER...
YOU'RE GOING OUT, SIR... TO PLAY TENNIS?
TO TRY, ANYWAY.
BUT WHY--?
BECAUSE I BROKE MY LAST DATE WITH PEGGY AND I CAN'T DO IT AGAIN!
BECAUSE I CAN'T ENDURE BEING HOLED UP HERE!--BECAUSE IF I DON'T LEARN HOW TO FUNCTION AGAIN, I'M FINISHED!
--BECAUSE THERE'S A DEMENTED, UNASSAILABLE KILLER AT LARGE!--AND BECAUSE IT'S COME DOWN TO SKULL DUGGER AGAINST GOTHAM CITY--AND ME!
4
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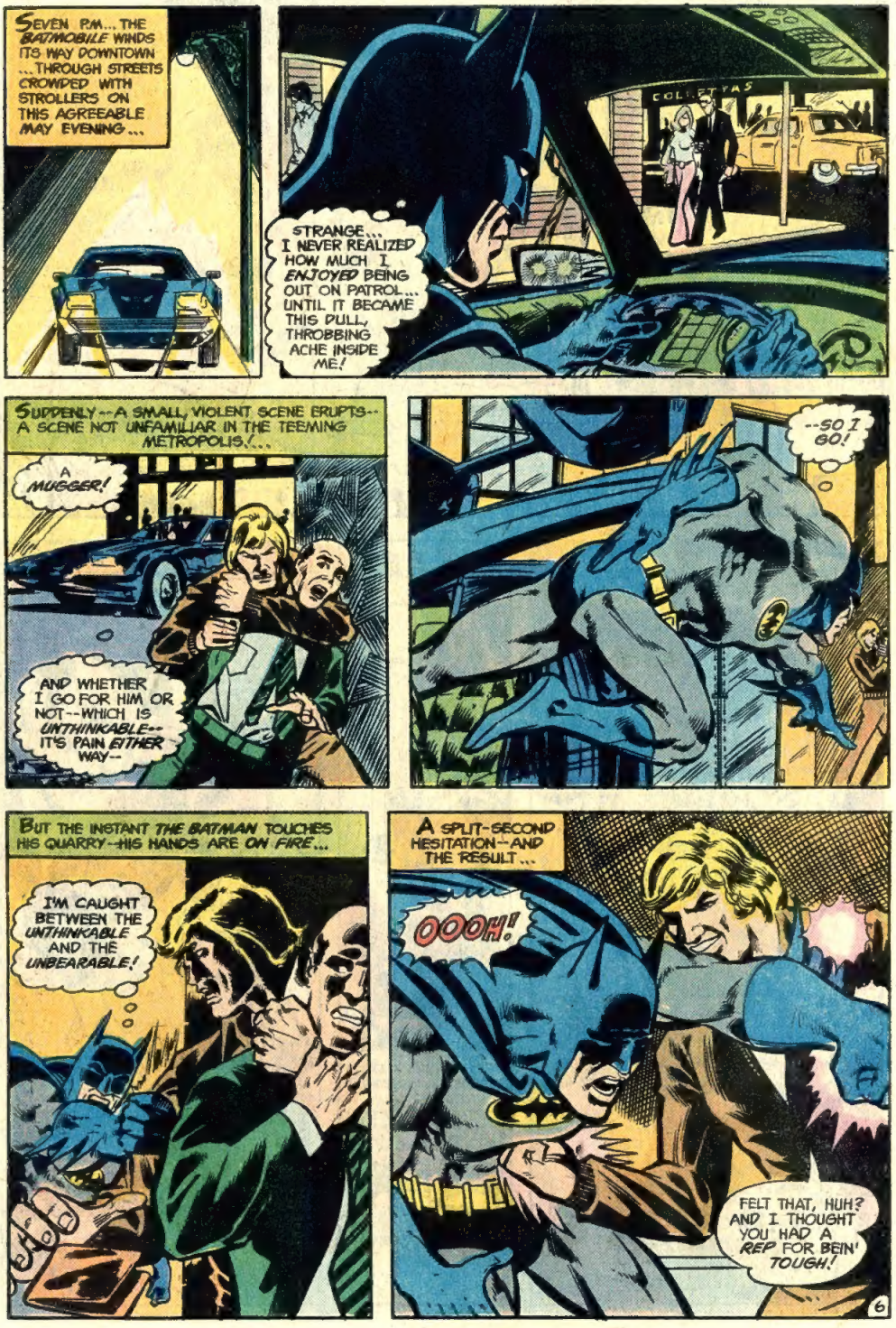
THE PARKSIDE TENNIS CLUB... AND, AS BRUCE HAS FEARED, A PLACE FAR TOO FULL OF HAPPY MEMORIES...
HERE SHE COMES... LITERALLY A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES! SO BEAUTIFUL... I CAN HARDLY BEAR LOOKING AT HER!
BRUCE, DEAR, WHAT AN EXPRESSION! IS THAT PAINFUL LOOK MEANT TO SHOW HOW SORRY YOU FEEL ABOUT OUR LAST DATE?
NO, SWEETHEART... ACTUALLY IT'S THIS DATE! BUT YOU'D NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT A COMPLIMENT THAT IS!
CAN'T EVEN TALK?... ALL CHOKED UP? WELL, I FORGIVE YOU-- AND HERE'S A KISS TO PROVE IT!
NO! IT'S MORE THAN I CAN TOLERATE!
I'M SORRY, PEGGY... TERRIBLY SORRY... BUT I MUST GO NOW...
BRUCE... WHAT'S GOT INTO YOU? I DON'T UNDERSTAND--
--NOR CAN I EXPLAIN!
AS A DISTRAUGHT BRUCE RETURNS HOME--
THERE WAS A CALL FROM COMMISSIONER GORDON, SIR! I SCREENED IT FIRST, IN CASE IT HAD GOOD NEWS...
...BUT IT'S ONLY ABOUT DR. SOMERS, OF MIDTOWN GENERAL HOSPITAL.
AND AFTER PLAYING THE TAPE...
I'M TO MEET DR. SOMERS TONIGHT... AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS ...CONCERNING AN AUTOPSY ON THE BODY SKULL DUGGER TRIED TO STEAL.
BUT, SIR--
NO BUTS, ALFRED! GET OUT MY WORKING CLOTHES!
5


SEVEN P.M... THE BATMOBILE WINDS ITS WAY DOWNTOWN ...THROUGH STREETS CROWDED WITH STROLLERS ON THIS AGREEABLE MAY EVENING...
STRANGE... I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH I ENJOYED BEING OUT ON PATROL... UNTIL IT BECAME THIS DULL, THROBBING ACHE INSIDE ME!
SUDDENLY--A SMALL, VIOLENT SCENE ERUPTS-- A SCENE NOT UNFAMILIAR IN THE TEEMING METROPOLIS/...
A MUGGER!
AND WHETHER I GO FOR HIM OR NOT--WHICH IS UNTHINKABLE-- IT'S PAIN EITHER WAY--
--SO I GO!
BUT THE INSTANT THE BATMAN TOUCHES HIS QUARRY--HIS HANDS ARE ON FIRE...
I'M CAUGHT BETWEEN THE UNTHINKABLE AND THE UNBEARABLE!
A SPLIT-SECOND HESITATION--AND THE RESULT...
OOOH!
FELT THAT, HUH? AND I THOUGHT YOU HAD A REP FOR BEIN' TOUGH!

MAYBE--IF INSTEAD OF THROWING-- I CATCH--
--LIKE THIS!
--THEN SQUEEZE!
OWW! LET GO! LET GO!
STOP! MY HANDS--YOU'RE CRUSHING 'EM!
CRUNCH
YES... MUST STOP... BEFORE I PASS OUT...
NOW I KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN BY TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING!
REEEEEEEE
HERE COME THE POLICE, BATMAN!
GOOD! I'VE GOT TO GET GOING!
WHEW! LOOK WHAT BATS DID TO THIS CREEP!
UH-HUH...THERE'S A MAN WHO REALLY ENJOYS HIS WORK!
7

MINUTES LATER, AT COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE...
WE JUST HEARD ABOUT YOUR BASH ON FOURTH STREET, BATMAN!
THEN YOU'RE OVER IT? YOU DON'T GET THOSE MYSTERIOUS PAINS ANYMORE?
FORGIVE ME, COMMISSIONER, IF I SAY--ONLY WHEN I LAUGH!
DOCTOR SOMERS, WHAT'S UP?
I'M STILL UNDER SUSPENSION AT THE HOSPITAL FOR BRINGING YOU INTO THIS WEIRD AFFAIR...
...BUT NOW, WITH THE PUBLICITY PRODDING THEM, THEY AUTOPSIED BOTH THE MAN IN OUR MORGUE AND THE ONE FROM THE GAMBLING HOUSE--
AND--?
*LAST ISSUE! --JULIE
--THE HEART-ATTACK HYPOTHESIS IS OUT! ALSO THERE WAS CLEAR EVIDENCE OF ELECTROLYSIS--CHEMICAL DECOMPOSITION CAUSED BY AN ELECTRIC CURRENT--
LIKE AN ELECTROCUTION...
YES--BUT THERE WERE NO ELECTRODES! WHERE DID THE CURRENT COME FROM?
AND THE SKULLS ON THEIR FOREHEADS--?
THEY'VE BEEN CLASSIFIED AS STIGMA ...WHICH CAN BE PRODUCED BY CAPILLARY CONGESTION--
--OR NERVOUS INFLUENCE! BUT WHY THAT STIGMA FORMS A WELL-DEFINED SKULL IS STILL AN UNRESOLVED MYSTERY, RIGHT?
RIGHT!
SUPPOSE--THEORETICALLY--THE NORMAL ELECTRIC BRAIN CHARGES WERE GREATLY INTENSIFIED BY SOME OUTSIDE AGENCY! THAT COULD CAUSE AN ELECTROCUTION FROM WITHIN!
THEORETICALLY... IT'S POSSIBLE...
COMMISSIONER, I'LL BE GOING NOW! DOCTOR SOMERS, THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!
WHAT HELP? YOU SEEM TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS--AND MORE!
IF YOU ONLY KNEW, DOCTOR... IF YOU ONLY KNEW!
8
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE 10...CWNG

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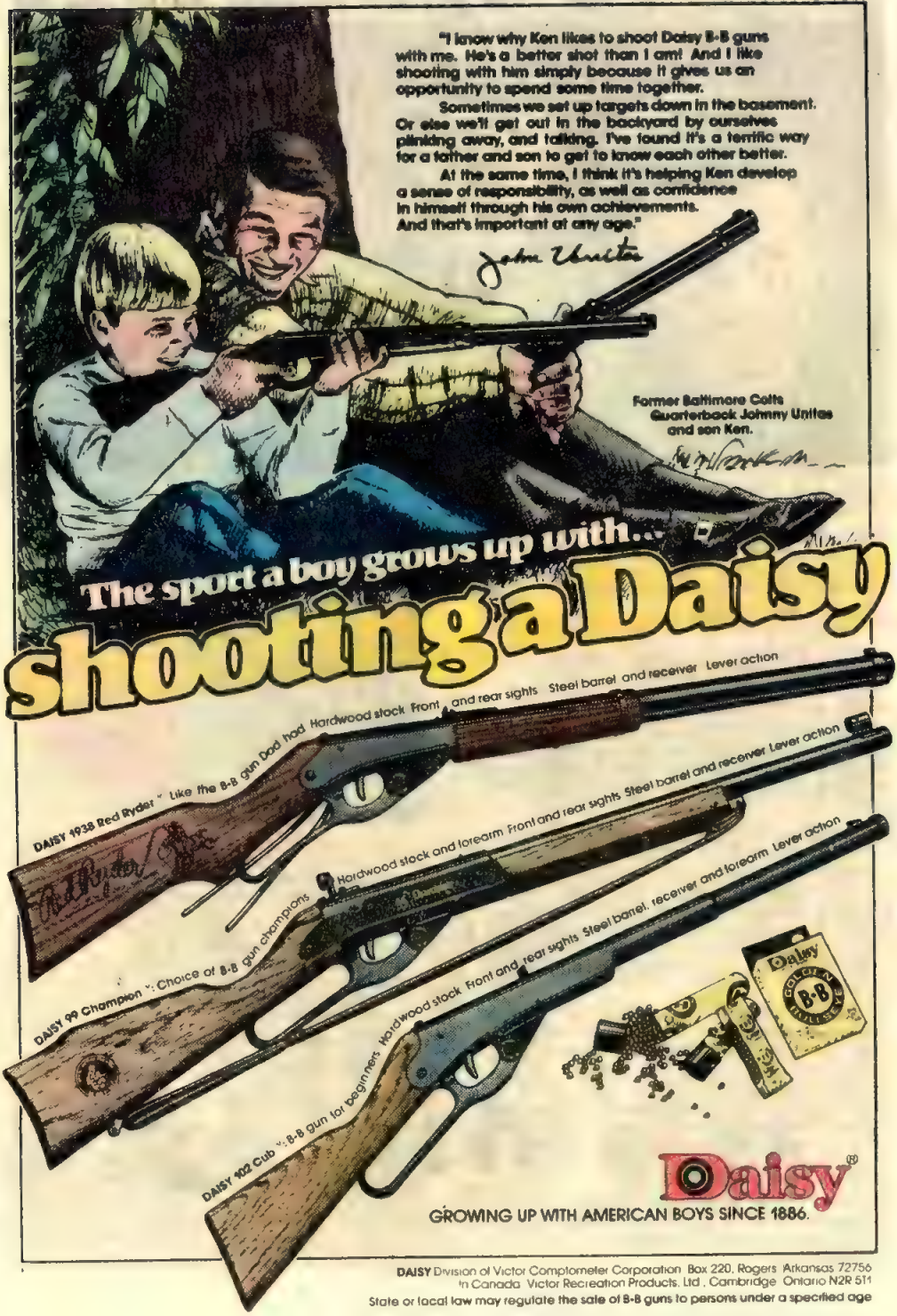
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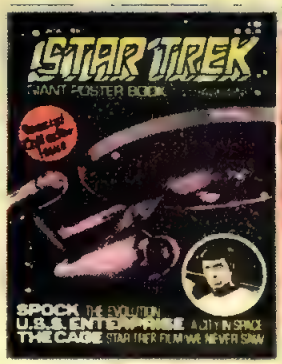

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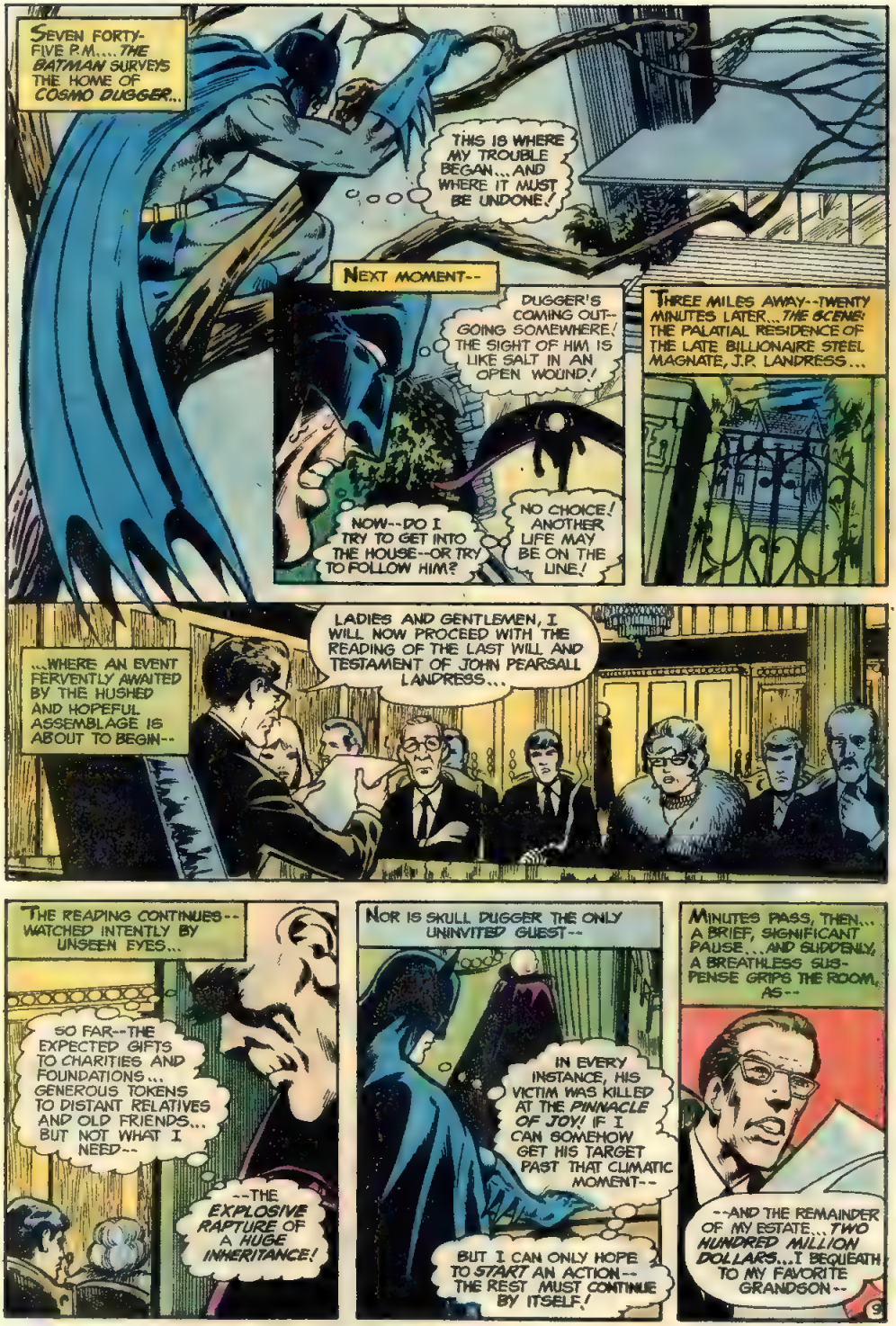
SEVEN FORTY-FIVE P.M.... THE BATMAN SURVEYS THE HOME OF COSMO DUGGER...
THIS IS WHERE MY TROUBLE BEGAN... AND WHERE IT MUST BE UNDONE!
NEXT MOMENT--
DUGGER'S COMING OUT--GOING SOMEWHERE! THE SIGHT OF HIM IS LIKE SALT IN AN OPEN WOUND!
NOW--DO I TRY TO GET INTO THE HOUSE--OR TRY TO FOLLOW HIM?
NO CHOICE! ANOTHER LIFE MAY BE ON THE LINE!
THREE MILES AWAY--TWENTY MINUTES LATER... THE SCENE: THE PALATIAL RESIDENCE OF THE LATE BILLIONAIRE STEEL MAGNATE, J.P. LANDRESS...
...WHERE AN EVENT FERVENTLY AWAITED BY THE HUSHED AND HOPEFUL ASSEMBLAGE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN--
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I WILL NOW PROCEED WITH THE READING OF THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN PEARSALL LANDRESS...
THE READING CONTINUES--WATCHED INTENTLY BY UNSEEN EYES...
SO FAR--THE EXPECTED GIFTS TO CHARITIES AND FOUNDATIONS... GENEROUS TOKENS TO DISTANT RELATIVES AND OLD FRIENDS... BUT NOT WHAT I NEED--
--THE EXPLOSIVE RAPTURE OF A HUGE INHERITANCE!
NOR IS SKULL DUGGER THE ONLY UNINVITED GUEST--
IN EVERY INSTANCE, HIS VICTIM WAS KILLED AT THE PINNACLE OF JOY! IF I CAN SOMEHOW GET HIS TARGET PAST THAT CLIMATIC MOMENT--
BUT I CAN ONLY HOPE TO START AN ACTION--THE REST MUST CONTINUE BY ITSELF!
MINUTES PASS, THEN... A BRIEF, SIGNIFICANT PAUSE... AND SUDDENLY, A BREATHLESS SUSPENSE GRIPS THE ROOM, AS--
--AND THE REMAINDER OF MY ESTATE... TWO HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS... I BEQUEATH TO MY FAVORITE GRANDSON--
9

--AND--WHAM! EVERYTHING HAPPENS AT ONCE!
--MARK RUPERT LANDRESS!
WOW!
IN AGONY, THE CAPED CRUSADER CLINGS TO HIS BATROPE AS IT COMPLETES ITS ARC--AND SWINGS HIM BACK AGAIN...
BUT NOW THE PENDULAR ENERGY IN THE BATROPE IS EXHAUSTED... THE BATMAN RENDERED MOTIONLESS...
WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS, BATMAN? WHO IS THIS MAN--AND WHY DID YOU ATTACK HIM?
I'M A REPORTER FROM THE GLOBE!
...AND SO CONSUMED WITH PAIN, HE CANNOT SPEAK!
--AND HE IS NOT THE BATMAN!
SMASH
JUST A HOODLUM--TRYING TO CREATE A DIVERSION--
SLASH
--SO HIS CRONIES OUTSIDE CAN SNEAK IN--AND LATER LOOT THE HOUSE!
WOULD THE REAL BATMAN TAKE THIS--?
--OR THIS?
10
CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

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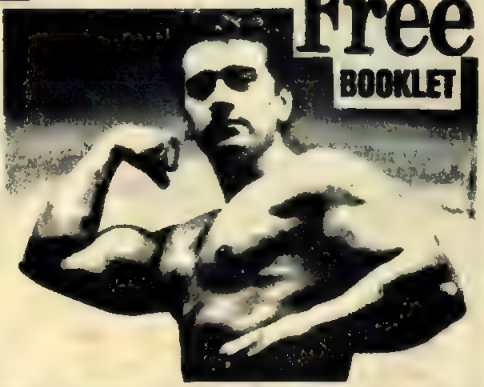

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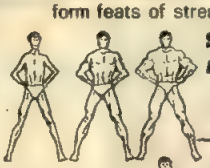

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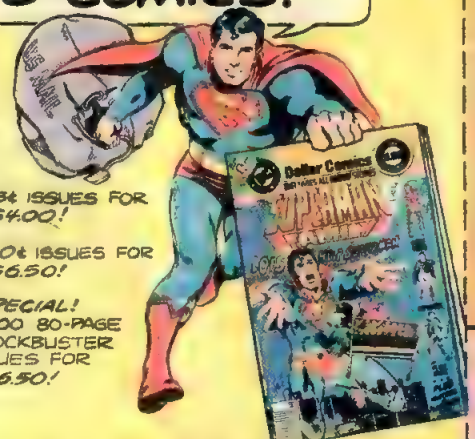

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A STROKE!
THERE HE GOES--AND EVEN IF I PURSUED HIM WHAT COULD I DO?
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HOLD IT, PUNK! YOU'RE NOT GOIN' ANYWHERE!
BELIEVE ME, FRIENDS--IT'S ONLY BECAUSE I GET NO JOY FROM DOING THIS--
--THAT I CAN!
11

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A DEAL!--SPEAK!
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NO ONE BUT YOU--WITH MY HELP!
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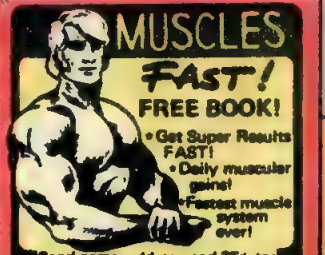

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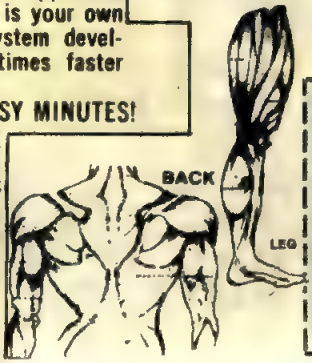

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ONE HOUR! I SHALL BE WAITING! DO NOT FAIL ME!
TWO MINUTES LATER...
WE HAD YOU ON THE SCREEN--YOU WERE GREAT, BATMAN!
HOW DO YOU FEEL?
LET'S SEE--
KRAK
DON'T FEEL A THING!
SWIFTLY, THE CAPED CRUSADER RACES ACROSS THE PRISON YARD--AND PAUSES FOR ONE PRECIOUS MOMENT...
I HAD TO TRICK YOU INTO IT, TZIN-TZIN--BUT YOU FINALLY DID ME A GOOD TURN!
13

A BLACK PROJECTILE TEARS THROUGH THE NIGHT--
SOON THE END OF SKULL DUGGER, THE KILLJOY...
...AND I FEEL NOTHING... AS THOUGH I WERE MADE OF ICE... OR STONE!
BUT WHEN THE BATMAN ARRIVES AT HIS DESTINATION...
NO LIGHTS./ LOOKS LIKE HE'S NOT HOME--
INSIDE-- AFTER A QUICK SEARCH...
GONE./... MOVED OUT./ UNLESS HE'S STILL COMING BACK FOR THE REST OF THIS INFERNAL EQUIPMENT./
NOTHING I CAN DO BUT WAIT!
MINUTE... BY MINUTE... TZIN-TZINS... HOUR... OF ... IMMUNITY... TICKS... AWAY...
AND JUST AS TIME RUNS OUT--A MOTOR OUTSIDE!...
HE'S BACK!
A DOOR OPENS... FOOTSTEPS... A CLICK OF A LIGHT-SWITCH...
CLICK
THE BATMAN!? I CAN'T BELIEVE IT... MUCH AS I WELCOME IT!
SLOWLY... THE BATMAN TAKES A STEP FORWARD...
INCREDIBLE! YOU CAN ACTUALLY FORCE YOURSELF TO MOVE TOWARD ME... IN SPITE OF ALL YOUR TORMENT!
ANOTHER STEP...
LOOK, BATMAN-- THE DUGGER DOUBLE-BARRELED SPECIAL--MADE EXPRESSLY FOR YOU!
ONE BARREL TO RESTORE YOU... THE OTHER--TO KILL YOU IN THAT SAME INSTANT--
--WITH THE NEXT STEP YOU TAKE!
14

AND WITH THAT NEXT STEP--
--AND THE NEXT...AND NEXT...
IT'S NOT WORKING??
BUT THIS GUN WILL!
AND LIGHTNING STRIKES!
15

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Muscle Builders will give you the kind of **SUPER BODY** that girls admire and men respect. You can add 10" of steel-like muscles to your chest, 6" to your arms, and can melt up to 12" from your waist. Your strength will double or even triple!!

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You can have the rippling muscles of a physique star. Mail the coupon for our free muscle building information. Please enclose 25¢ to help cover postage & handling costs.

"GAINS 14 POUNDS OF MUSCLE IN 14 DAYS"
I have gained 14 pounds in only 2 weeks. My arms and chest are much bigger.
Doug Elliott

"LOST 8" OFF HIS WAIST"
I knocked 8" off my waist and have lost 20 pounds of fat. I'm twice as strong.
R. Bonham

"GIRLS NOTICE HIM"
My arms are now 19", chest 51", thighs 26", and waist 32". All the girls notice me now.
T. B. Pinsoneault

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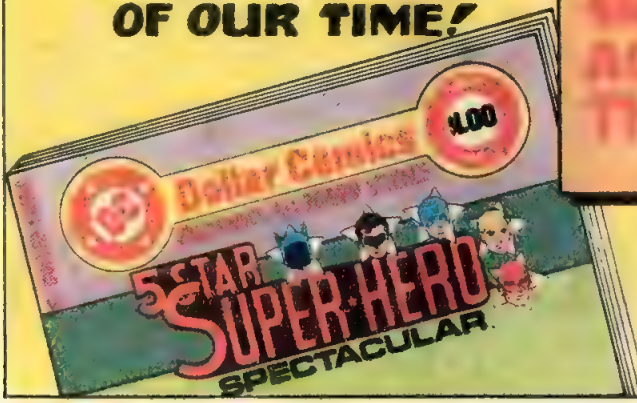
232 W. Front St., Napoleon, OH 43545
Rush me all that free muscle building information in a plain wrapper so I can build powerful muscles fast. I am enclosing 25¢ to help cover postage & handling costs. I am under no obligation.

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

JUST IMAGINE!

5 STORIES FEATURING the MIGHTIEST HEROES OF OUR TIME!



BATMAN!
FLASH!
GREEN LANTERN!
AQUAMAN!
The ATOM!

IN DC'S FIRST ALL-NEW DOLLAR COMIC ANNUAL!
ON SALE JUNE 16TH!

THE GREAT SUPERMAN MOVIE CONTEST

TWO FIRST PRIZES

* A ROLE IN THE UPCOMING *SUPERMAN* MOVIE!

plus - AN EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO VISIT THE OFFICES OF *DC COMICS!*

ENTER TODAY!

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- *SECRET ORIGINS OF DC SUPER-HEROES* BOOK.
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- YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION TO *THE AMAZING WORLD OF DC COMICS.*
- COPIES OF THE ALL-NEW *SUPERMAN vs Wonder Woman, SUPERMAN vs MUHAMMAD ALI* AND *LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES SUPER-SIZE COMICS.*

OR

- TICKETS TO *SUPERMAN MOVIE PREVIEWS!*

ALL ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE JULY 15, 1977!

HERE'S HOW TO ENTER - -

1. Simply collect the coupons found at the bottom of most DC Comics' letters pages dated AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, AUGUST/SEPTEMBER, SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 1977. Collect the appropriate coupons which, when collected in order, spell out "S-U-P-E-R-M-A-N" and either "K-A-L-E-L" or "C-L-A-R-K", staple or clip them together in order, place them in a legal-sized (4 1/8" x 9 1/2") envelope with your name, address, and telephone number, and mail it to "The Great Superman Movie Contest", DC Comics Inc., Post Office Box 116, Radio City Station, New York, NY 10019.
2. Enter as often as you like, but be sure each entry is complete with all the necessary letters and each entry is mailed individually.
3. Only the entire coupon - containing the phrase "The Great Superman Movie Contest" and the specific letter - will be valid.
4. All entries must be received by DC Comics before 5 PM, July 15, 1977. All entries will be placed in a drum and two first prize envelopes will be selected on July 18, 1977 on the set of the Superman movie. First prize winners will be notified by telegram. Second prize drawings will be held during the week of July 18, 1977; winners will be notified by mail.
5. Employees of Warner Communications Inc. and its subsidiaries and affiliates, and DC Comics' free-lance artists, writers, colorists, and letterers, any of the participating wholesalers of Independent News Company, and the immediate families of those employees are specifically excluded from this contest.
6. There are no age or racial restrictions; males and females are equally eligible to win. First prize winners must be available for work on the Superman Movie set during a specific date and time in late summer of 1977. During this period, the first prize winners and each winner's companion will be taken on a personal tour of DC Comics in New York. If the first prize winner is a minor, said winner's companion must be a parent or guardian of the winner.
7. Second prize winners will receive a card in the mail offering the various prizes, from which they will indicate their preferences. These prizes will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis; and all second prize winners will receive one of their noted preferences.
8. Contest void where prohibited by law and subject to all applicable Federal, State and local laws and regulations.

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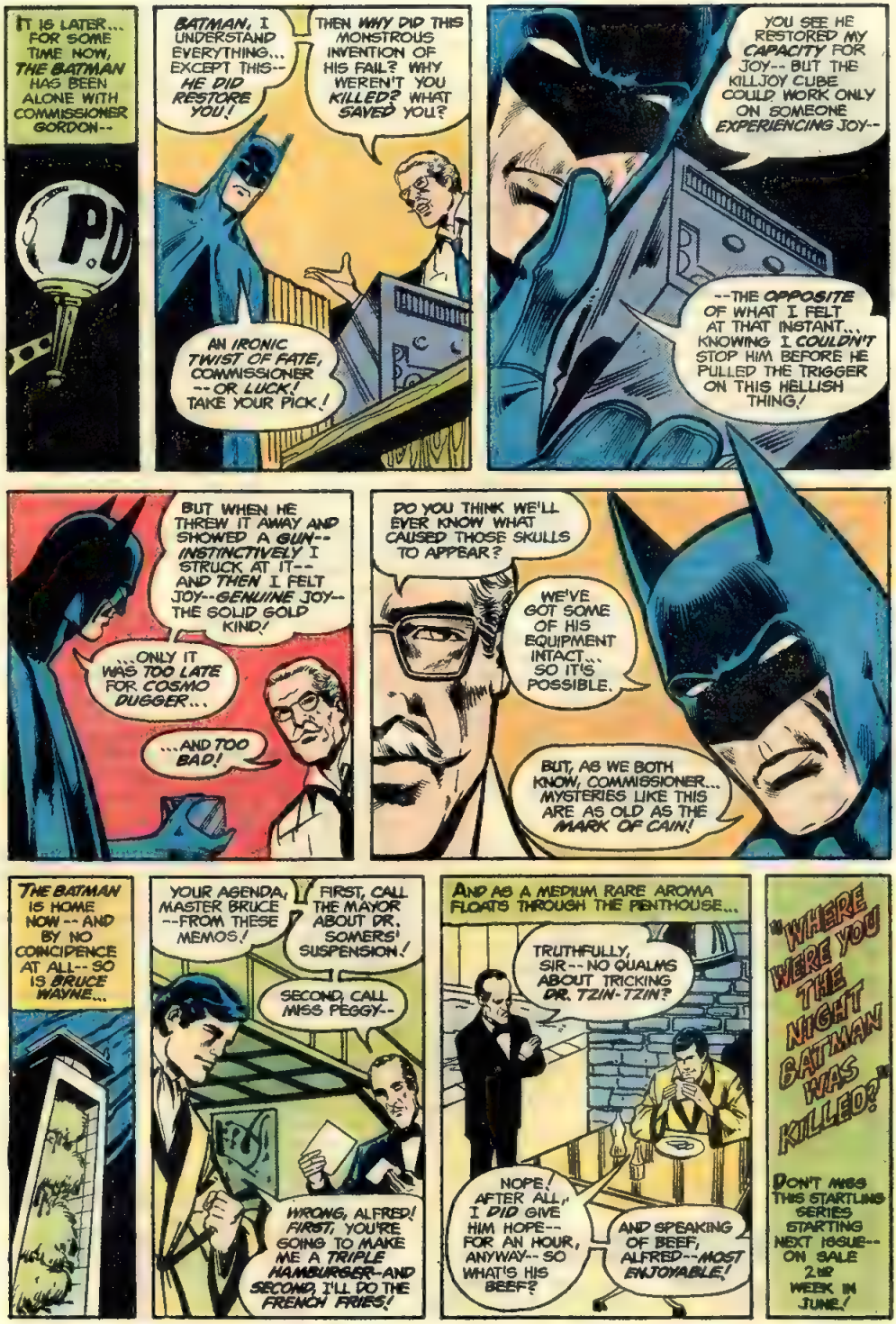
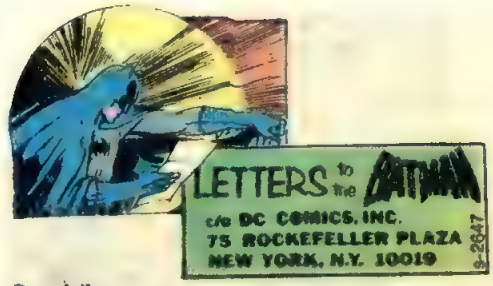

IT IS LATER... FOR SOME TIME NOW, THE BATMAN HAS BEEN ALONE WITH COMMISSIONER GORDON--
BATMAN, I UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING... EXCEPT THIS-- HE DID RESTORE YOU!
THEN WHY DID THIS MONSTROUS INVENTION OF HIS FAIL? WHY WEREN'T YOU KILLED? WHAT SAVED YOU?
AN IRONIC TWIST OF FATE, COMMISSIONER --OR LUCK! TAKE YOUR PICK!
YOU SEE HE RESTORED MY CAPACITY FOR JOY-- BUT THE KILLJOY CUBE COULD WORK ONLY ON SOMEONE EXPERIENCING JOY--
--THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT I FELT AT THAT INSTANT... KNOWING I COULDN'T STOP HIM BEFORE HE PULLED THE TRIGGER ON THIS HELLISH THING!
BUT WHEN HE THREW IT AWAY AND SHOWED A GUN-- INSTINCTIVELY I STRUCK AT IT-- AND THEN I FELT JOY--GENUINE JOY-- THE SOLID GOLD KIND!
...ONLY IT WAS TOO LATE FOR COSMO DUGGER...
...AND TOO BAD!
DO YOU THINK WE'LL EVER KNOW WHAT CAUSED THOSE SKULLS TO APPEAR?
WE'VE GOT SOME OF HIS EQUIPMENT INTACT... SO IT'S POSSIBLE.
BUT, AS WE BOTH KNOW, COMMISSIONER... MYSTERIES LIKE THIS ARE AS OLD AS THE MARK OF CAIN!
THE BATMAN IS HOME NOW -- AND BY NO COINCIDENCE AT ALL-- SO IS BRUCE WAYNE...
YOUR AGENDA, MASTER BRUCE --FROM THESE MEMOS!
FIRST, CALL THE MAYOR ABOUT DR. SOMERS' SUSPENSION!
SECOND, CALL MISS PEGGY--
WRONG, ALFRED! FIRST, YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE ME A TRIPLE HAMBURGER--AND SECOND, I'LL DO THE FRENCH FRIES!
AND AS A MEDIUM RARE AROMA FLOATS THROUGH THE PENTHOUSE...
TRUTHFULLY, SIR -- NO QUALMS ABOUT TRICKING DR. TZIN-TZIN?
NOPE! AFTER ALL, I DID GIVE HIM HOPE-- FOR AN HOUR, ANYWAY-- SO WHAT'S HIS BEEF?
AND SPEAKING OF BEEF, ALFRED--MOST ENJOYABLE!
"WHERE WERE YOU THE NIGHT BATMAN WAS KILLED?"
DON'T MISS THIS STARTLING SERIES STARTING NEXT ISSUE-- ON SALE 2ND WEEK IN JUNE!



Dear Julie:

So, after battling **Two-Face**, the **Scarecrow**, the **Royal Flush Gang**, **Green Arrow** and **Black Canary** (not to mention the **Creeper** and the **Weeper**), the Clown Prince of Crime has returned to trade fisticuffs with his oldest, most fearsome adversary in a story penned by Denny O'Neil and drawn by Irv Novick. Did they succeed or did they flop? Let us see.

Boyoboyoboyoboy, did they succeed!!!

"The Joker's Playground of Peril" in **#286** is a complex, suspenseful, baffling, fantastically wonderful (I guess I liked it!) mystery saturated with false clues, real clues, plot-twists, plot-untwists and a lot of other stuff all thrown together in a mix calculated to keep the reader baffled and guessing until the very last panel. Even the appearance of **Robin** (and the campy gimmick of chrinking the psychiatrist) wasn't irritating, which in my book is a definite coup on O'Neil's part. Well done!

After a superlative story like this one, it's a shame THE JOKER had to lose his own magazine!

ADAM CASTRO
59 Harlan Drive,
New Rochelle, NY 10804

(Get outa here, Rozakis—I'm handling this letters page! Move it! Now! Or you'll find Joker's venom in your yogurt! . . . Ahem, now where were we? Oh, yes—nice to see you've come around to my side, Castro! Seems to me you used to complain about the stories in my own magazine! But, no matter, give me a chance and I'll take over this book!—J.)

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

Like a royal banquet to a starving man—that's how Denny O'Neil's latest **Batman** story affected me. Examine the following lines, culled from **BATMAN #286:**

"How the devil did you know? You couldn't have seen it all!"

"There he goes! B-but how'd you guess—?"

"As usual, you've proven yourself a brilliant detective!"

What's so special about these bits of dialogue? Simply, they show people reacting to **The Batman**—reacting with respect, admiration, awe. And **The Batman**'s response?

"When you know your men, you can predict their actions!"

"You should have known better—I reasoned it!"

"Not really . . . I should've known **The Joker** was disguised as an attendant . . ."

Here, **The Batman** is the enigmatic, almost supernally keen detective—deliberately surprising and impressing even his friends with his prowess. Technically, we didn't need this; the plot would have been just as clear with silent panels and cool emotionless explanations. For me, though, these few lines made the story. Suddenly the Gotham Crusader was less of a hand calculator and more of a personality. That, in my eyes, is **The Batman** as he should be.

PAUL EMRATH
5075 North 83rd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53218

(Bats has the personality of a dead fish! Now as far as being the life of the story, you have to admit it was the clever, witty, colorful . . . ME!—J.)

Dear Editor:

"The Joker's Playground of Peril" was a brilliant tale and Denny O'Neil kept it humming from so many angles that you had to look close to see that **The Joker** was actually present in less than 20% of the panels. But his presence was **always** there.

With **BATMAN** on a monthly basis, I believe that you can find space for two **Joker** tales a year, just about the credible amount to explain his jailbreaks and such!

CHARLES D. BROWN
39 Stockton St.
Brentwood, NY 11717

(TWO appearances a year? I should be in all twelve issues and maybe I'll let Bats appear twice! But what could a kid named Charlie Brown know? Your dog's smarter than you are!—J.)

* * * * *

THE JOKER'S ONE-LINERS

. . . The great story coupled with Irv Novick's pencils (Bob Wiacek's inks leave something to be desired) produced a magazine well worth the 30¢ I paid for it!

STEPHEN SETTER
11 Early Drive
Portsmouth, VA 23701

("Wiacek?" (Pronounced why-a-check) "Why not cash?" Or: "Wiacek? Why not a Bulgarian?" Or: "Wiacek? . . ." Oh, you get the idea?—J.)

. . . . By the time this letter gets into print, I hope I'll have seen **The Joker** again . . . somewhere . . anywhere!

PETER MULLER
7 Navajo Ave.,
Wayne, NJ 07470

(Anywhere, huh? So that's how I ended up here! Let me tell you . . .

"There he is, Julie! I told you he was here! And look what he's done to my letter column!!"

"Calm down, Rozakis! I'll handle this! . . . Now look, Joker, we agreed to let you appear in #286 if you would leave us alone!"

You LET me appear?!? Who are you kidding, Schwartzo? Without my smiling face, this magazine would be the pits!

"That's your opinion . . ."

I'll show you! I'm going to get all my baddie buddies together and we're going to take over this magazine! Wait'll the readers get a look at next issue's fabulous "Where Were You on the Night Batman Was Murdered?" You'll see who's important around here! You just WATCH—THE JOKER)

THE GREAT SUPERMAN MOVIE CONTEST

DC HOTLINE NATIONWIDE* 800-223-7700

DAILY PLANET

DC HOTLINE *NEW YORK ONLY 212-757-9517

VOLUME 77 ISSUE 19 | WEEK OF MAY 9, 1977 | BOB ROZAKIS EDITOR | ANTHONY TOLLIN PRODUCTION

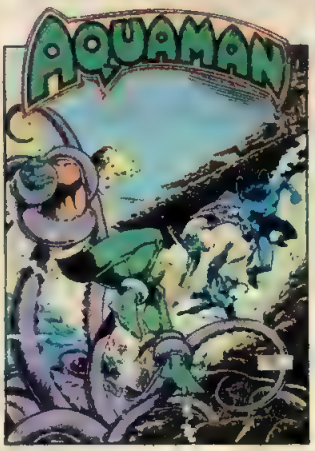
AQUAMAN VOWS VENGEANCE!

SWEARS TO KILL BLACK MANTA FOR MURDERING HIS SON

(Atlantis)—Arthur Curry, Jr., son of *Aquaman* and *Mera*, is dead—the victim of the villainous *Black Manta*!

Now, the sea king vows vengeance and declares that his battle with the undersea villain will end with "A Life For a Life!" You won't want to miss this David Michelinie/Jim Aparo collaboration as *Aquaman* swims back into the pages of his own magazine.

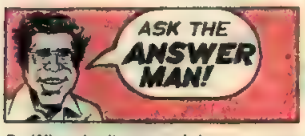
Also in this issue, learn more about the split between *Aquaman* and *Aqualad* and watch as the entire kingdom of Atlantis mourns the death of Arthur, Jr. To make sure you get your copy, keep an eye out at your comics dealer's for *AQUAMAN #57*, on sale the week of May 16th.



ABEL PRESENTS DOUBLE DYNAMITE IN HOUSE OF SECRETS

(The House of Secrets)—*Abel*, the bumbling caretaker of the *House of Secrets* has a pair of chilling stories for you during the week of May 16th.

Leading off the issue is "A Gift of Evil" by Jack Oleck, Ernie Chua and Bill Draut—the tale of how a good deed can come to a horrifying end. Then, learn the startling secret of "The See-Through Thief" in a story by David Michelinie, Russell Carley and Alex Nino. Top these thrillers off with a chuckle from Dave Manak, "Abel's Fables" and you've got *HOUSE OF SECRETS #147*!



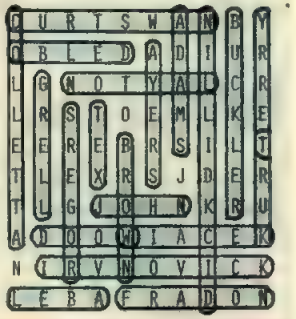
Q: Why don't you print our names when you print our questions?—*Tommy Fischer.* *A:* I couldn't think of a good answer, so your names will appear henceforth!

Q: Will *Hawkman* ever have his own comic again?—*Jack Snowden.* *A:* Plans are being made for a new three-issue tryout in *SHOWCASE* for the Winged Wonder. If you readers support it, who knows?

Q: How did Barry Allen become the Fastest Man Alive?—*Bill D. A:* A recap will appear in our $1 special *FIVE-STAR SUPER-HERO SPECTACULAR*, on sale in mid-June . . . or check out the opening blurb in each issue of *THE FLASH*!

Got a question for the Answer Man? Send it to Bob Rozakis, DC COMICS, 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, NY 10019.

And before you ask, here is the solution to last week's Mini-Puzzle.



DIRECT CURRENTS

ON SALE THE WEEK OF MAY 16TH

G.I. COMBAT #203—Another dynamite dollar issue featuring three *Haunted Tank* battle blockbusters by Bob Kanigher and Sam Glanzman: "To Trap a Tiger", "The Floating Bull's Eye", and "Even Generals Obey Orders!" Plus: an O.S.S. thriller, "The Bride Carried a Tommygun" by Bart Regan and E.R. Cruz; a Jeb Stuart solo adventure, "No Hiding Place for the Artillery" by Kanigher and John Calnan; "The Pin-Up Was a Lieutenant" by Regan and Fred Carrillo; "The Sub With Two Lives" by Evan Douglas and George Evans; and Combat Curiosities, Battle Brain-teasers and more!

HERCULES UNBOUND #12—The man-god makes his final bow in an amazing adventure by Cary Bates and Walt Simonson!

PLASTIC MAN #10—John Albano, Ramona Fradon and Bob Smith present another laugh-a-minute caper with the Pliable Policeman!

SGT. ROCK #307—A new mission could spell death for *Rock* and the men of Easy Company in this Bob Kanigher/Joe Kubert tale. Plus a Kanigher's Gallery of War story: "The Knights!"

SUPERBOY #230—Paul Levitz, James Sherman, and Jack Abel introduce "The Creature Who Conned the Legion!" Then, read about "The Day Bouncing Boy Bounced Back" by Levitz, Mike Nasser, and Abel.

WORLD'S FINEST #246—*Superman* finds himself the "Prisoner of the Kryptonite Asteroid" and only *Batman* can help him in this Bob Haney/Kurt Schaffenberger/Murphy Anderson collaboration. Then, the *Vigilante* comes up against an old foe, *The Dummy*, in "Son of a Gun" by Bill Kunkel and Gray Morrow; *Green Arrow* goes on a "Manhunt for a Murderer" by Gerry Conway, Mike Nasser and Terry Austin; *Black Canary* finds herself involved in a Wulf Hunt" by Conway, Nasser and Austin; and *Wonder Woman* faces a new foe in "The Baron's Name is Blitzkrieg" by Conway, Don Heck and Vince Colletta.

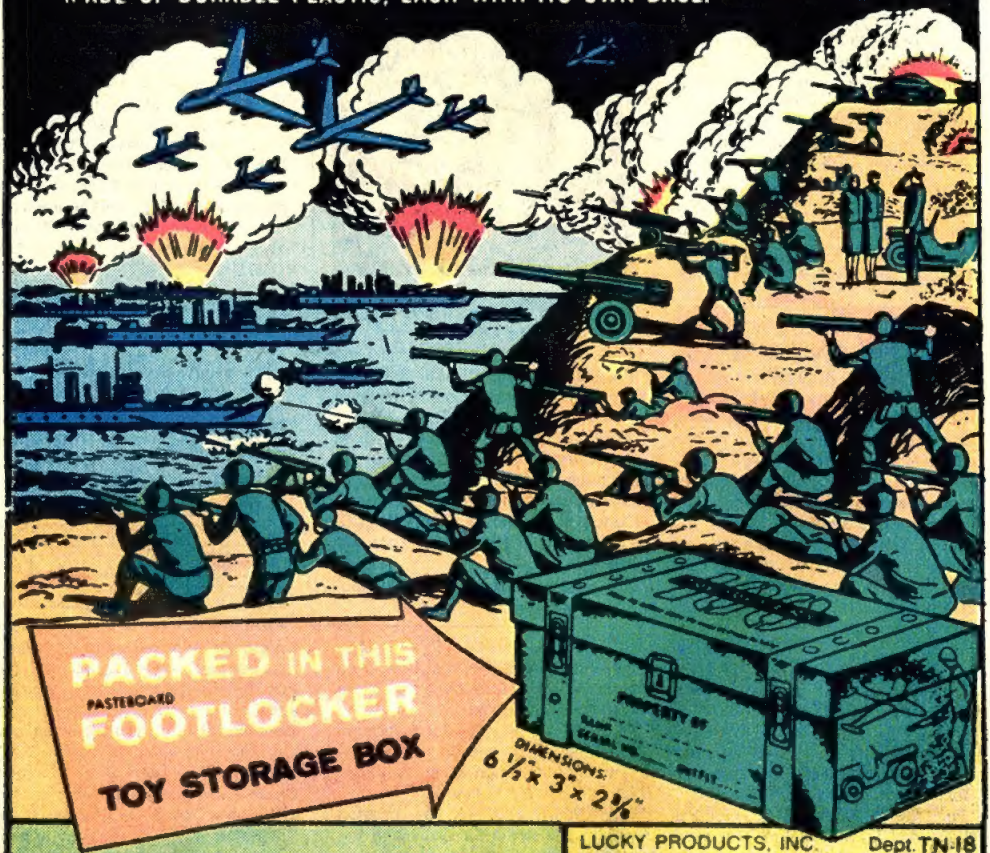
AND ON SALE RIGHT NOW:

BATMAN #290/DC SPECIAL #29 (Origin of the Justice Society)/THE FLASH #252/MEN OF WAR #1/ SHADE #2/STARFIRE #7/TEEN TITANS #49

100 PC. TOY SOLDIER SET

$1.75

MADE OF DURABLE PLASTIC, EACH WITH ITS OWN BASE.



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Rush the TOY SOLDIER SET TO ME!
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Allow 5-6 weeks for delivery.
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SELECTED FOR YOU BY EXPERTS. This choice fish-getting tackle, used by thousands throughout the United States and Canada. Each item carefully chosen—everything you need for all types of fishing. Deadly lures that are all time favorites. A veteran angler or an occasional fisherman can be proud of this precision-built kit. You can go fishing at once. Compare! You may not find a bargain like this anywhere.

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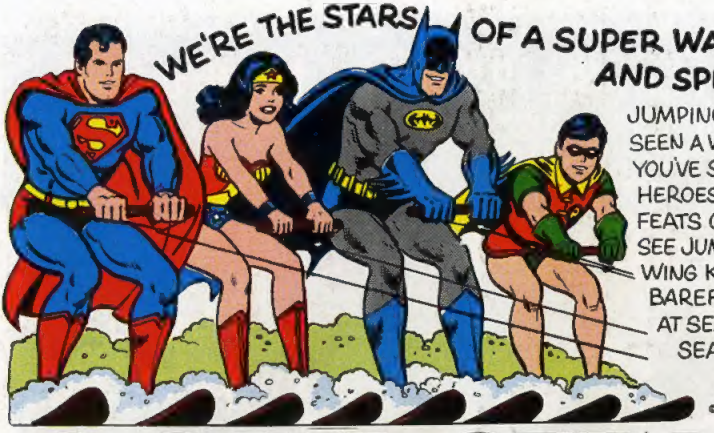
TO CANADA $16.95—Includes postage and duty.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